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Labour Migration, Market Competition and Ethnocentrism: Guest workers in Israel and Germany

Ergebnisse eines Forschungsprojektes und Beschreibung des Datensatzes (ZA-Studien-Nr. 3974)

by Julia Iser and Silvia Keil

1 Abstract of the research project

The major objective of the research was to examine attitudes and values toward guest workers in Israel and Germany in a comparative perspective. The main objects of examinations are the social conditions which shape the normative system of beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice and behaviour toward foreign workers and ethnic minorities.

The research was cast within theoretical frameworks that focus on the emergence of prejudice, discrimination and ethnic antagonism in modern societies. Two alternative, but by no means contradictory, models were used. The first is social psychological and centres on such concepts as social distance, prejudice, authoritarianism, and ethnocentrism. The second approach focuses on group competition over resources and rewards in national markets. Data to test the hypotheses were taken from national representative samples of adult citizens in Israel and Germany, respectively. The data was analysed using a variety of multivariate statistical models. It was our aim to contribute to a better understanding of the Israeli and German societies and to the theoretical knowledge regarding the social conditions that affect the system of values, attitudes, and behaviour toward migrant workers and ethnic minorities in modern societies. The comparison between Germany and Israel was one special point of interest, because Germany has been employing guest workers for more than a quarter of a century whereas Israel only recently began to rely on foreign workers.

The influence of guest worker communities on contemporary societies is one significant social and economic problem of modern states. The study tried to increase the understanding of these mechanisms and phenomena.

2 The data

The data sources are two national population surveys, one in Israel and one in Germany. The German data (sample size 3306) was collected in 1996 and the Israeli survey (sample size 1105), was done in 1999. The whole sample consists of $N = 4411$ cases.

The German data (General Social Survey; ALLBUS) is a national representative survey, which has been conducted every two years since 1980. It is a random sample of the adult German population, supervised by ZUMA (centre for survey research and methodology). In the German data set the foreigners living in Germany have been excluded because they were not asked all the relevant questions.

Beside the demographic topics, the ALLBUS questionnaire in 1996 concentrates on the subject: "Attitudes towards ethnic groups in Germany". Therefore it is especially suited for analysing attitudes towards immigrants of different ethnic origins. We took a selection of the ALLBUS 1996.

The database consists of all people who were born before 1.1.1978 and who are living in private households in Germany. In a first step, a random sample of 162 communities had been taken from all communities in Germany. In a second step, a random selection of 40 addresses from the inhabitant lists of the chosen communities had been sampled.

The Israeli data is based on a survey of the adult Israeli population based on a stratified sample of 1105 respondents conducted in Israel during the second half of 1999. A questionnaire containing attitudes and beliefs towards immigrants and labour migrants was modelled after instruments developed in following studies: Eurobarometer Survey (Western Europe), the General Social Survey ALLBUS (Germany), and the survey organized by the Canadian Institute for Public Opinion. In addition, the questionnaire contained data on demographic, socio-economic and labour force characteristics. The interview was conducted face to face and lasted about 40 minutes. The rate of response was 50 percent, which is typical in the Israeli society.

There had been two different treatments for the missing values in the two data sets. The German data contained the value labels: does not apply, answer refused and no information as missing values. There were exclusively system missings in the Israeli data. In the merging file procedure all the missing values were transformed into system missings.

The two data files were merged in order to create a joint dataset. The variables were matched and coded in identical manner in order to conduct a comparative analysis.

In the German ALLBUS the East German Population was over-represented. So was the Arabic population in Israel. To correct this, the following analyses were done by using a weighting variable (variable name: weight).

3 Results and Publications

The two research teams from Israel and Germany published a number of articles in the last three years. They focus the common topic “Labour Migration, Market Competition and Ethnocentrism: Guest Workers in Israel and Germany” from different perspectives. Due to the different theoretical frameworks mentioned above some articles highlight the *explanatory* power of the split labour market approach whereas others focus on ethnocentrism and authoritarianism. Especially those articles that were written together did the innovate step to combine the two approaches.

A short overview over the output of two years of cooperation: **Peter Schmidt** and **Aribert Heyder** focused in their first two articles on the causal relationship between authoritarianism and ethnocentric attitudes in Germany. Their first article “Authoritarianism and Ethnocentrism in East and West Germany: Does the system matter?” deals with the differences between East and West Germany concerning the different types of political systems of the former GDR and West Germany, the second article “Autoritarismus und Ethnozentrismus in Deutschland: Ein Phänomen der Jugend oder der Alten?” focuses on the impact of age on hostile attitudes toward foreigners and guest workers.

The article “Konkurrenz, Bedrohung oder Bereicherung? Einstellungen gegenüber Ausländern in Deutschland und Israel” by **Julia Iser**, **Silvia Keil** and **Peter Schmidt** gives an descriptive insight in the German and Israeli societies concerning the level of Xenophobia in both countries.

Also descriptive but with the centre of attention on attitudes towards labour migration is the article “Labour migration in the public eye: Attitudes towards foreign workers in Israel” by **Moshe Semyonov** and **Rebeca Raijman**.

Next, these two authors and **Anat Yom Tov** published a paper, which takes into account the split labour market approach. “Labour Market Competition, Perceived Threat, and Propensity for Economic Discrimination” examines the impact of la-

bour market competition and fear of economic competition on propensity for economic discrimination against foreign workers in Israel.

The impact of perceived threat to social and economic well-being of individuals as well as threat to national identity on granting equal social rights to foreign workers is examined in the article “Perceived Threat and Exclusionary Attitudes towards Foreign Workers in Israel” by **Rebeca Raijman** and **Moshe Semyonov**.

“Labor Market Competition, Perceived Threat, and Endorsement of Economic Discrimination Against Foreign Workers in Israel” is the title and the topic of another article by **Moshe Semyonov**, **Rebeca Raijman** and **Anat Yom Tov**. Here the three researchers found support to socio-psychological explanations of discrimination, suggesting that fear of economic competition is more pronounced among the disadvantaged, subordinate, and vulnerable populations; and that support of economic discrimination against foreign workers is affected first and foremost by perceived threat.

“Do Foreigners Deserve Rights?” is the leading question of the likewise titled article by **Rebeca Raijman**, **Moshe Semyonov** and **Peter Schmidt**. They compare public views regarding equality of rights foreigners deserve. The comparison is interesting especially for two reasons. First, the incorporation of foreign workers is of special significance in both countries since their presence challenges the ethno-national definition of the two societies. Second, Germany has long been employing foreign workers while Israel has only recently begun relying- on labour migrants.

In “Population Size, Perceived Threat and Exclusion: A Multiple Indicators Analysis of Attitudes Toward Foreigners in Germany” **Moshe Semyonov**, **Rebeca Raijman**, **Peter Schmidt** and **Anat Yom Tov** challenge the long-standing theoretical proposition that hostility and discriminatory attitudes toward foreigners are likely to rise with the relative size of foreign population. By use of a sophisticated analytical model they combine the two theoretical approaches mentioned above. The results show that perceived size is associated with perceived threat, and perceived threat is found to mediate the relations between perceived size and support for exclusionary practices against foreigners.

4 Publications

Heyder, Aribert and **Schmidt, Peter**, 2001: Autoritarismus und Ethnozentrismus in Deutschland: Ein Phänomen der Jugend oder der Alten? in: **U. Boehnke, D. Fuss** and **W. Hagan** (eds.), *Jugendliche und Rechtsextremismus*. Weinheim: Juventa Verlag, S. 119-142

Iser, Julia; Keil, Silvia and **Schmidt, Peter**, 2002: Konkurrenz, Bedrohung oder Bereicherung? Einstellungen gegenüber Ausländern in Deutschland und Israel. in: **C. Gansel** und **A.-P. Enslin** (Hrsg.), *Literatur, Kultur und Medien. Facetten der Informationsgesellschaft*. Berlin: Weidler Verlag, S. 185-203.

Raijman, Rebeca and **Semyonov, Moshe**, 2004: Perceived Threat and Exclusionary Attitudes Towards Foreign Workers in Israel, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, forthcoming.

Schmidt, Peter and **Heyder, Aribert**, in press: Authoritarianism and Ethnocentrism in East and West Germany: Does the system matter? in: **R. Alba, P. Schmidt** and **M. Wasmer** (eds.), *Germans and Foreigners. Theoretical Models and Empirical Analyses*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, S. 187-210

Raijman, Rebeca; Semyonov, Moshe, and **Schmidt, Peter**, 2003: Do Foreigners Deserve Rights? Comparing Public Views towards Foreigners in Germany and Israel. in: *European Sociological Review* 19, 379-392.

Semyonov, Moshe; Raijman, Rebeca; Anat Yom Tov, Schmidt, Peter, 2004: Population Size, Perceived Threat and Exclusion: A Multiple Indicators Analysis of Attitudes Toward Foreigners in Germany, accepted for publication in *Social Science Research*.

Semyonov, Moshe; Raijman, Rebeca and **Anat Yom Tov**, 2002: Labor Market Competition, Perceived Threat, and Endorsement of Economic Discrimination Against Foreign Workers in Israel. in: *Social Problems* Vol. 49, no 3, 416-431.

Semyonov, Moshe; Raijman, Rebeca and **Anat Yom Tov**: Labor Market Competition, Perceived Threat, and Propensity for Economic Discrimination." The paper was submitted to the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August, 2001. It was presented in Oxford by **Moshe Semyonov** in May 2001.

Semyonov, Moshe; Raijman, Rebeca, 2000: Labor Migration in the Public Eye: Attitudes Towards Foreign Workers in Israel. in: *ZA-Information* 47, 6-28.